

Blanket Primary decision will change the way we vote

Another court ruling of note will soon affect the way we cast our votes at the ballot box. You may have heard Washington's "blanket primary" has been ruled unconstitutional, and wondered what that meant. Let me explain.

Washington's current system allows voters to choose any candidate on the ballot, regardless of party affiliation, so a

voter can vote for a Democrat candidate in one race and a Republican in another.

Unfortunately the major political state parties have sued to stop this, claiming the system violates the constitutionally-protected right of freedom of association. So far the courts have agreed with them and are telling Washington that we need a new primary election law by

next year, or else we will not be able to hold a primary.

So what are the options in Washington State? Below are a few of the potential ideas being discussed as alternatives.

Personally, I am disappointed that the major political parties are putting their desires for control above the people's rights to elect the person they feel is the best person for the job.

Primary options:

Closed Primary

This is the solution preferred by the parties. In a closed primary system, citizens are required to register for a particular political party when they register to vote or else their vote won't count in the primary. When at the polls, the voter receives a ballot with only their chosen party's candidates for office (so if you registered as a Democrat you would only be able to vote for Democrats in the primary). Minor party and independent candidates would only appear on the general election ballot.

Open Primary

An open primary is exactly like the closed primary, only you don't have to become a registered party member to have your vote count. Some forms of this system make a public record of the choice of party the voter selected. Other states, like Montana, require voters to select a specific ballot, but the choice each voter makes is not public record.

Modified Blanket Primary

In this system, citizens are not required to designate a specific political party when they register to vote. At the primary, voters simply select one candidate in each race. The choice each voter makes is not a matter of public record. The two candidates receiving the most votes regardless of party affiliation then go on to the general election. So it would be possible to have two Democrats or two Republicans in the general election.

The choice of a primary system going forward will be one of the most important policy decisions this year's Legislature makes. Different systems will lead to different types of legislators elected. I am very curious to hear from you as to which of these systems you would prefer and why. Please take the time to fill out the attached postcard and let me know.

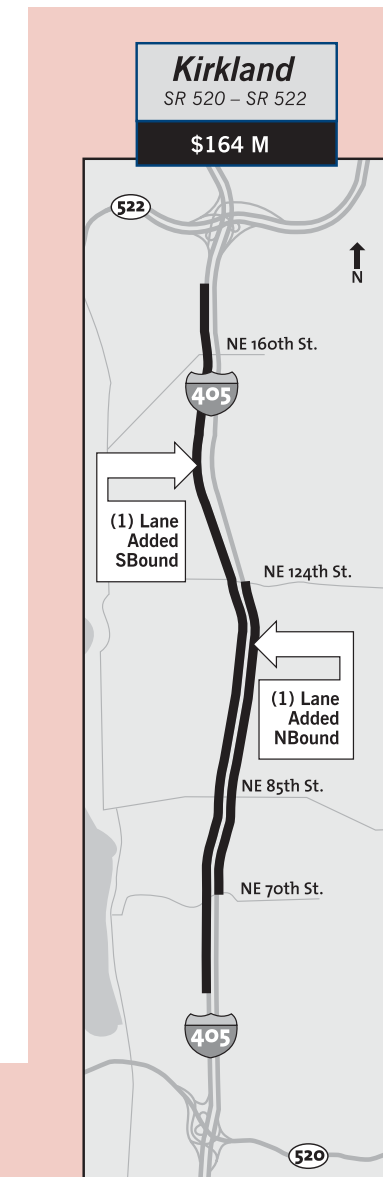
Nickel Fund projects begin construction

This past legislative session, lawmakers passed a comprehensive transportation package to address many of the problem spots in our commutes. The list of projects was carefully prioritized and placed into statute. Part of this legislation included the creation of the "Nickel Fund". The Nickel Fund is being used to collect the money raised through the five cent increase in the gas tax that took effect on July 1.

Much of the money being collected by this Nickel Fund will be spent on the Eastside of Lake Washington. Specifically, the I-405 and 520 improvements both in Kirkland and in Redmond should improve traffic flow, or at least stop it from getting worse. As part of the I-405 Congestion Relief and Bus Rapid Transit Project, one of the major improvements funded through the Nickel Fund is the following:

Kirkland I-405 Improvements

- Adds one lane north-bound from NE 70th to NE 124th.
- Adds one lane south-bound from the SR 522/I 405 interchange to the SR 520/I-405 interchange.
- Total cost of \$164 million.
- Project design is underway.

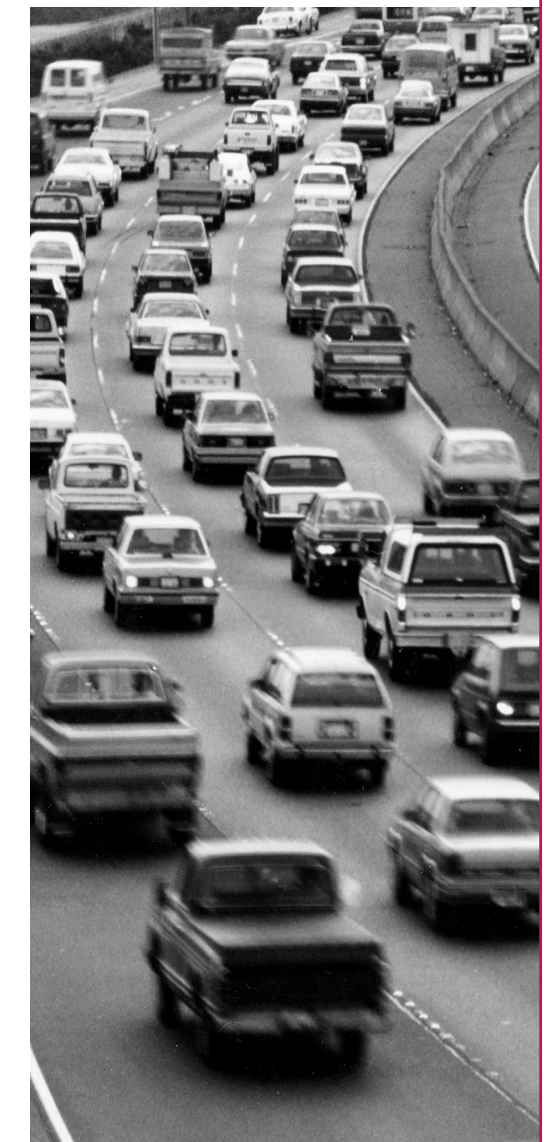


Construction on this project is scheduled to begin in 2006, although I've heard it might be sooner.

Another major project that will enter the planning phase soon is improvements to SR-520 between the West Lake Sammamish Parkway and SR-202. This stretch of SR-520

has been a traffic choke-point in Redmond for many years. The planned project will add HOV and general purpose lanes in both directions, easing congestion in the AM and PM for Redmond and Sammamish commuters.

For more information on these projects, and others throughout the Puget Sound region and across Washington State, head to www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects.



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Blanket Primary Survey

As you’ve read in this newsletter, Washington State will soon see a change to our primary system due to a recent court decision. Which of these options being discussed in the Legislature would you prefer to see? Please select one:

- ☐ Closed Primary
- ☐ Open Primary
- ☐ Modified Blanket Primary

I would like to hear your comments on this issue. Please feel free to use this space to voice other comments about the primary decision.

Comments:

Cut along dotted line, fold in half with address facing out, and mail!

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Washington State Legislature ~ 45th Legislative District Fall 2003



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Dear Neighbors:

As the seasons change from summer to fall, and kids head back to school, the Legislature begins preparations to return to Olympia as well. While we accomplished much last session—including the passage of a transportation funding package, unemployment insurance reform and balanced the budget without raising general taxes—there is, as always, still much to be done.

As your representative in the state Senate, I wanted to update you on some of the issues I see being of importance in the 2004 Legislature. I’m looking for your feedback as well regarding what issues are important to you.

A recent court decision will affect the way we cast our votes in our state’s primary elections. Action must be taken by the Legislature and this will be an important issue this year. I explain the background on this debate, and explain some of the solutions inside this newsletter. I hope to hear your feedback on this issue.

Telemarketers have been in the news lately as well with the creation of a national Do Not Call list. It’s another issue we may have to address.

And finally, transportation improvements in the Puget Sound region are starting to pick up steam. I want to let you know what improvements to watch for, and how you can stay updated and involved.

I also want to thank you for allowing me to serve you in Olympia in the Washington State Senate. The job you have elected me to is a challenging one, and I will continue to make every effort to assure the voice of the 45th District is heard.

Sincerely,

Bill Finkbeiner

Sen. Bill Finkbeiner
45th District

Strike Back at Telemarketers

For five of the last seven years, I have sponsored legislation that would create a “Do not call” list in Washington State that would allow Washington citizens to opt out from telemarketing calls. Every year the telemarketing lobbyists were able to stymie the bill somewhere in the process, partly by telling legislators that most people don’t care much about this issue.

With the creation of a Do Not Call List last year by the federal government the fallacy of that statement became known. In fact, since the

creation of this list more than 50 million people have signed up. Unfortunately the telemarketing associations took this issue to court and recently two court rulings have stalled the implementation of the list.

While Congress is trying to fix the problem there remains a good chance that this issue will have to be addressed at the state level. I already have a bill drafted up and am ready to go.

A recent humor column by Dave Berry that I enjoyed suggested a different tact altogether. Berry

suggested consumers themselves strike back by calling the telemarketing companies to see how they like unsolicited phone calls. If you would like to call the telemarketing companies for more information, or to voice your opinion, you may do so by calling 317-816-9336, the number for the national telemarketing association.

In the meantime, if you would like to sign up for the federal program you may do so by visiting the following Web site,

www.donotcall.gov,
or by calling 1-888-382-1222.